

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: _____ F. _____

Date: _____ May 25, 2005 _____

Topic: First Review of a Recommendation from the Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments

Presenter: Mr. Thomas M. Jackson, Jr., President of the Virginia Board of Education

Telephone Number: _____ **E-Mail Address:** _____

Origin:

_____ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

X Board review required by

X State or federal law or regulation

_____ Board of Education regulation

_____ Other: _____

_____ Action requested at this meeting _____ Action requested at future meeting: _____ (date)

Previous Review/Action:

_____ No previous board review/action

X Previous review/action

date March 23, 2005

action The Board of Education approved the establishment of the Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments.

Background Information:

The Board of Education is authorized to prescribe requirements for the licensure of teachers. Section 22.1-298 of the Code of Virginia states, in part, the following:

- A. The Board of Education shall, by regulation, prescribe the requirements for licensure of teachers. Regardless of the authority of any other agency of the Commonwealth to approve educational programs, only the Board of Education shall have the authority to license teachers to be regularly employed by school boards, including those teachers employed to provide nursing education.

B. Such regulations shall include requirements that:

1. Every teacher seeking initial licensure take a professional teacher's examination prescribed by the Board;...

C. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board may provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any person who does not meet the requirements of this section or any other requirement for licensure imposed by law.

On March 23, 2005, the Virginia Board of Education approved the establishment of a *Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments*. The committee was charged with the responsibility of examining the use of teacher licensure assessments in Virginia and other states and make recommendations to the Board of Education. The committee's work was to include, but not be limited to, an examination of appropriate sections of the *Code* including regulations governing licensure of teachers; the federal requirements regarding teacher quality; the use of teacher licensure assessments in other states; and options for using various teacher licensure assessments in the preparation and licensing of teachers.

Summary of Major Elements:

The *Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments* was established and included representation from the Board of Education, Virginia General Assembly, Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, the Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Virginia Education Association, the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, institutions of higher education with approved teacher education programs, school division superintendents, school principals, and school division human resources directors.

The committee held four meetings on the following dates: March 31, 2005, April 13, 2005, April 22, 2005, and May 10, 2005. During the meetings, the committee received presentations on national and state perspectives on teacher education and licensure assessments and engaged in discussions with presenters. The presenters from other states included Jane P. Norwood, Vice-Chair, North Carolina Board of Education; Dr. Carol Gilbert, Executive Director for Educator Preparation and Quality, Massachusetts Department of Education; Dr. Marilyn Troyer, Associate Superintendent for the Teaching Profession, Ohio Department of Education; and Dr. Louise A. Tanney, Coordinator of Teacher and Principal Assessment, Division of Certification and Accreditation, Maryland State Department of Education. In addition, the following individuals presented national perspectives on assessments: Dr. Charles Coble, Vice-President, Policy Studies and Programs, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado; Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality, Washington, DC; Dr. Jane Hannaway, Education Policy Urban Institute for Economic and Social Policy Research, Washington, DC; and Dr. Randy Thompson, Vice-President of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), Washington, DC. Opportunities for public comment also were provided during two of the four committee meetings.

During the May 10, 2005, meeting the committee unanimously approved the following recommendation and implementation requirements to be submitted to the Board of Education for review and action:

The Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments recommended that the Board of Education prescribe the following professional teacher's examinations for initial licensure in Virginia: (1) Literacy and Communication Skills Assessment; (2) Praxis II (content assessment); and (3) if applicable, the Virginia Reading Assessment.

The implementation of the prescribed professional teacher's examinations would include the following guidelines:

1. The assessments [Literacy and Communication Skills Assessment, Praxis II, and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), if applicable] will be required for all individuals seeking initial licensure in Virginia except individuals who have completed a minimum of two years of full-time, successful teaching experience with an effective license from another state at the time of application. The proposed effective date for the implementation of the licensure assessments is January 1, 2006, depending on the timeframe to develop the Literacy and Communication Skills assessment.
2. The Literacy and Communication Skills Assessment will be composed of two areas—reading and writing. The test will measure communication and literacy skills necessary to teach and communicate effectively with parents and others in the education community.

[Individuals will be asked to demonstrate comprehension and analysis of readings; development of ideas in essay form on specific topics, outlining and summarizing; interpreting tables and graphs; mastery of grammar, and mechanics; vocabulary; and writing.]
3. Requirements for admission into approved programs, including entry assessments, will be set forth in the *Regulations Governing the Approved Programs for Virginia Institutions of Higher Education*.
4. Individuals otherwise eligible for licensure who have not completed the assessment requirements may be issued a provisional license not to exceed one full school year. (This guideline was approved by the special committee by a vote of 7 to 5.)
5. Individuals seeking the Pupil Personnel Services License and the Technical Professional License will not be subject to the assessments. *Regulations Governing the Approved Programs for Virginia Institutions of Higher Education* and the *Regulations Governing the Licensure of School Personnel* will set forth the communication and literacy competencies for these license types.

Superintendent's Recommendation: N/A

Impact on Resources: N/A

Timetable for Further Review/Action: